

FAX

Date: January 25, 2002

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Subject: Microsoft Settlement Public Comment

Message:

Attached are my further comments for your consideration.

January 25, 2002

Renata Hesse
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Re: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Ms. Hesse:

Microsoft has done, and continues to do, serious damage to consumers and competitors alike. I will list here the evidence I have witnessed personally.

Microsoft eliminated all competition in the spreadsheet industry, thus destroying Borland, a local company. Hundreds of jobs were lost in our city alone, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars lost in local revenue.

Microsoft blatantly gave away their Internet browser software, Explorer, virtually eliminating Netscape, a pioneer in the industry. Without remedy consumers will have no choice but to use Explorer. Then Microsoft will be free to charge whatever fees they please. They will be the only gateway to an enormous new marketplace. On-line consumers will be at their mercy.

Consumers already suffer, in a number of ways, just by using Microsoft software products.

I have worked on both Microsoft and Macintosh operating systems, so I believe I am qualified and justified in comparing the two.

Microsoft Windows products have been notoriously unstable for years. They consistently crash computers for no apparent reason. They are filled with "bugs" that often require specialized knowledge to repair. Users are strangely resigned to these problems since they feel they have no other choice in the business world. The new Windows OS was supposed to correct this problem, but hasn't. I never have these types of problems with my Macintosh.

I have a friend who has been a computer hardware and software engineer for 25 years. He is a brilliant engineering consultant who has worked all over the world. He recently bought the new Windows OS. It took him three days of hard work to upgrade from his old system. He ended up buying an entirely new hardware system to run his old programs because the new Windows operating system was not compatible with most of his old software. He readily acknowledged that Microsoft does not care in the least about the grief and cost to its customers.

I recently upgraded my Macintosh system. It took my local dealer a couple of hours. It now runs like a charm.

The average computer user has a choice. They can spend vast amounts of time mastering complex software and hardware technology. Or, they can spend vast amounts of money,

paying computer technicians to assist them in solving mundane computer problems that shouldn't exist in the first place. Or, they could buy a Macintosh, as long as Microsoft allows Apple to exist.

In seventeen years I can count on one hand the number of times I've had to consult a technician in regards to my Macintosh. In two years I lost count of the number of times I needed a technician to solve software problems with Windows

The damage done to consumers is compounded by Microsoft's vulnerability to breaches of security of its on-line and email services. They are prone to hackers, viruses, and their own quality control problems.

It has been well documented that Microsoft has ignored pleas to improve security, and that they have had the capability, but chose not to implement it. Just another example of their arrogant disregard for the welfare of their customer.

The longer Microsoft is allowed to tighten their grip on the computer industry, the higher the cost will be to consumers. It will be much more than just the financial cost. There will be further losses in productivity, losses in innovation, and losses in consumer confidence, if the world comes to rely on an inherently flawed system, with no hope of change.

My local congressman has chosen to abrogate his responsibility on this important issue. It is possible that he is ignorant of the dangers to his constituents, since Microsoft poses a serious threat to the Silicon Valley economy. Or, perhaps Microsoft has "persuaded" our fine congressman that it would be in his best interest to look the other way. Whatever the case might be, I pray that you will seek justice for the consumer, and inflict the harshest penalties possible upon Microsoft.

Cordially,



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cc: Congressman Mike Honda